**CIS105 Lesson 2 Lab: Word Processing**

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### Ethics, plagiarism, copyright and piracy

Often times, knowing the difference between right and wrong is how ethics is understood. “*The Belmont Report* from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare shows three of the most useful ethical principles:

* An act is ethical if, were everyone to act the same way, society as a whole would benefit.
* An act is ethical if it treats people as an end in themselves rather than as a means to an end.
* An act is ethical if impartial observers would judge that it is fair to all parties concerned.” (LeBerta, 2012 pg.37)

However, applying ethics to computers can create a new type of challenge. Not always is there an easy way to determine proper computer ethic, therefore several ethical principles have been developed to help guide users towards the correct ethical behavior when working with computers. Adopting good netiquette is one way an individual can maintain proper computer ethics. Netiquette, which is guidelines for proper behavior during online interactions, assists an individual in understanding what is and is not acceptable behavior when in chat rooms, playing on online games or with general computer usage. “The Computer Ethics Institute of the Brookings Institution, located in Washington D.C., has developed the following “Ten Commandments for Computer Ethics” for computer users, programmer’s, and system designers. Many businesses, academic institutions, and organizations post or refer to these principles:

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people’s computer files.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people’s computer files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witnesses.
6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid for.
7. Thou shalt not use other people’s computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people’s intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.
10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for your fellow humans.”(LeBerta, 2012 pg.38)

Plagiarism is unethical and illegal because when one plagiarizes they are being deceitful. This is due to the fact that they are trying to take credit for someone else’s work. Additionally, it is illegal because they are taking the others work without obtaining permission from the individual. For students, plagiarizing material can lead to devastating consequences. Therefore, it is of upmost importance that a student understands plagiarism and knows how to properly cite works of others. Giving credit when credit is due will ultimately benefit the student. When understanding the fundamentals of copyright, there are several aspects that one should comprehend. First, copyright is a legal approach that allows the creator to obtain the rights to the work they created. Furthermore, it allows for the creator to be compensated or give permission to use his or her work. If the creator allows for the work to be used by another individual, it is crucial that the individual gives the correct credit to the creator. When using software purchased for one computer then trying to use it again for another can be considered as software piracy. “Just like written works, most computer software (including computer games) is copyrighted, which means that you can’t make copies for other people without infringing on the software’s copyright. Such infringement is called software piracy and are a federal offense in the United States.” (LeBerta, 2012 pg.43)

## 8 ACM general moral imperatives for a computing professional

Codes of conduct are important to ensure the success of any profession. Codes such as these, have been developed by professional associations such as The Association for Computing Machinery. “Of all the computing associations’ codes of conduct, the one developed by the ACM ([www.acm.org](http://www.acm.org)) is considered the most innovative and far reaching. According to the ACM general moral imperatives, a computing professional.

1. Contributes to society and human well-being
2. Avoids harm to others
3. Is honest and trustworthy
4. Is fair and takes action not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, disability, or national origin
5. Honors property rights, including copyrights and patents
6. Gives proper credit when using the intellectual property of others
7. Respects the right of other individuals to privacy
8. Honors confidentiality.

Like other codes of conduct, the ACM code places public safety and well-being at the top of the list.” (LeBerta, 2012 pg.41)

# Albion and Netiquette

While reading the Albion website, I found a few rules listed surprising. I have not put a *great deal* of thought into the fact that when I write an email or post a message online, it will forever be available. In my many years of using yahoo.com for email purposes, I have on occasion received and sent emails that have a negative tone. Afterwards, I delete them, perhaps out of shame but also due to the fact that I do not want them to remind me of the negative nature they were received or sent in. Once deleted I feel better knowing they are gone. Never once have I considered that they are still lurking somewhere in cyberspace. Additionally, Rule 4: Respect other people’s time and bandwidth never occurred to me. “The word "bandwidth" is sometimes used synonymously with time, but it's really a different thing. Bandwidth is the information-carrying capacity of the wires and channels that connect everyone in cyberspace. There's a limit to the amount of data that any piece of wiring can carry at any given moment -- even a state-of-the-art fiber-optic cable. The word "bandwidth" is also sometimes used to refer to the storage capacity of a host system. When you accidentally post the same note to the same newsgroup five times, you are wasting both time (of the people who check all five copies of the posting) and bandwidth (by sending repetitive information over the wires and requiring it to be stored somewhere).” (Shea. 2011 web) Last, I believe Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control, is important and it is also something I have never given much thought too. I do not use chat rooms however, at one-time I did poses an active Facebook account. For the most part, it was in my experience a way for old friends to connect with each other. However, sometimes I would notice the unnecessary rude comment that one user would give to another. After unkind words were dispersed it was only a matter of time before others chimed in. Therefore, using rule 7 in order to diffuse such situations would be very beneficial.

By applying the 10 rules of netiquette, one can easily and successfully maintain good netiquette in work, school or home. In work, maintaining a professional attitude and using good business ethics while utilizing computer technology will enable an individual to successfully apply the ten rules of computer netiquette. At school, it is important that a student abides by the school rules that refer to proper computer usage. It is especially important that a student remembers Rule 1: Remember the Human and Rule 7: Help Keep Flame Wars Under Control because of the growing concern of cyber bullying. Cyber bullying has became a growing trend amongst students. Sadly, this trend has destroyed lives and even resulted in suicides. Thus, it is of extreme importance that a student uses proper netiquette at both school and home.

**Rule 3:** Know where you are in cyberspace can be summarized by understanding the topic of discussion and whom you are discussing it with. Depending upon these two understandings, one can make an informed decision on how to act while online. **Rule 6:** Share expert knowledge allows an individual to share online what he or she is knowledgeable in. Furthermore, rule 6 encourages one to do such things as contribute to an online chat room, blogs or other types of social media. Keeping in mind that sharing knowledge is fun and ultimately makes the world a better place supports the ideas of rule 6. Last, Rule 9: Don’t abuse your power is of great importance. Although the world is not made up of computer geniuses, there are many who have the ability to understand the science behind computers and manipulate them better than others. Even though an individual can do things such as reading another’s private email, does not mean that they should.

Works Cited

"NetEtiquette: The Core Rules of Netetiquette." *Albinion.com*. Albinion, Web. 29 Oct. 2013.

LeBerta, Catherine. *Computers Are Your Future*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson, 2011. Print.